DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 659 CE 008 260

AUTHOR Hoyt, Kenneth B.
TITLE Career Education: What's Doable Now?
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 13p.; Presented at the Sacramento Career Education Conference (Sacramento, California, August 29, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Career Education; Educational Change; *Educational Policy; Financial Support; Government Role; Institutional Role; Needs Assessment; *Policy Formation; *Program Development; Program Effectiveness; Public Policy; School Role; Speeches; *Trend Analysis; Vocational Development
IDENTIFIERS United States

ABSTRACT

Career education, as it currently exists, is put in perspective with reference to broader and more far-reaching proposals for dealing with the education/work dilemma in the United States. In so doing, career education is pictured as a movement that operates under a "possible change" philosophy. Current strengths of career education are represented along with a general set of action steps that could be undertaken in any community interested in initiating a career education effort. Observations are noted regarding the current readiness to move, on a nationwide scale, from a demonstration to a programmatic implementation mode in career education. It is concluded that to attempt such a nationwide implementation, more financial support than currently seems available is needed. (TA)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED128659

CAREER EDUCATION: WHAT's DOABLE NOW?

Kenneth B. Hoyt
Director, Office of Career Education
United States Office of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Introduction

The career education movement has been moderately successful in gaining public understanding and support of its two basic goals which are: (1) to help all individuals understand and capitalize on the increasingly complex and changing relationships between education and work; and (2) to make work become a more personally meaningful part of the total lifestyle of all individuals. While, to be sure, large segments of our population have still never heard the term "career education," those who have heard and understood these goals have generally endorsed them.

The broad and ambitious nature of these two goals stands as a certain guarantee that they will not be attained quickly nor easily. Faced with the many obvious societal disparities between current conditions in our society and these lofty goals, it is not surprising that questions such as the following are being asked with increasing frequency:

1. How do you expect to change the common mistaken perceptions of the general public regarding the meaning of education, of "work," and of relationships between education and work?

2. How do you expect educational systems to initiate and carry out the kinds of major reform called for by career education in these times when education budgets are being cut and no new major Federal aid to education is being proposed?

3. How do you expect to reduce youth unemployment when its causes are rooted in conditions over which education has little or no control?

Remarks prepared for presentation to the Sacramento Career Education Conference. Sacramento, California, August 29, 1975.

CE 008 210

4. How can you expect work to become "meaningful" and "satisfying" when so many de-humanizing jobs exist and must continue to exist in the world of paid employment?

Such questions, reflecting a concern that career education may be a crusade of over-promise and under-delivery, are often accompanied by major and sweeping proposals for societal reform including such things as:

1. Creation of a system of public service jobs so that all who seek to work are guaranteed employment.

2. Creation of an educational voucher system guaranteeing each individual from 4 to 7 years of postsecondary education to be utilized, as seen fit by the individual, during his or her adult life.

3. Creation of a system of guaranteed accurate and up-to-date system of local labor market situations and occupational outlook.

4. Creation of a complete system of performance evaluation in education leading to abolishment of the Carnegie unit and the false credentialism resulting from over-reliance on degrees.

5. Revision of existing manpower, employment service, welfare, and education legislation in ways that will re-allocate Federal funds so as to emphasize a national education/work initiative.

6. Revision of existing child labor laws so as to permit a wider range of work experience opportunities for youth.

7. Creation of a national system, including appropriate financial incentives, aimed at encouraging American industry to humanize conditions in the work place.

These, and many other major reform proposals, are currently being championed by some and debated by others across the land. To the extent that such proposals can be converted into effective action programs having positive impact on the two broad goals of career education, it seems likely that many career education proponents may be supportive of them. At the same time, it seems both unwise and unproductive to wait until some or all such major reforms have come about prior to any attempts to implement the career education concept as it presently exists. Quite an

opposite strategy would seem to be in order. That is, if, given the practical limitations imposed by the realities of today, we can begin to move toward effective delivery of career education, it may serve to be the most effective possible stimulus for encouraging positive acceptance of more radical reform measures.

Career education is a concept calling for a philosophy of "possible change now." It is, in a very real sense, an attempt to operate in an atmosphere of pragmatic idealism. It is a movement that values improvement in situations where we know perfection is still not attainable. As such, it subscribes to a point of view that holds it is better to do what can be done than to do nothing at all.

Given this point of view, three questions seem appropriate to ask: (1) What are the current strengths of career education that lead us to believe it can be effective? (2) What can communities do now to initiate a career education effort? and (3) How ready are we to move toward full implementation of the career education concept? This presentation will be aimed at providing brief answers to these three questions.

Current Strengths of Career Education

What strengths, and hopes, does career education bring to us as we enter the 1975-76 school year? Stated another way, why should any community consider initiating a career education effort, or expanding on its past efforts, at this time? Several positive factors are immediately apparent.

1. The educational and societal needs to which career education seeks to respond have been well documented. These needs are real. They can no longer be ignored. Career education represents one clear response to the call for change reflected in these needs. (Herr & Kramer, 1975).

CE 008 260

2. Basic elements in the career education concept have been identified. The degree of consensus, among leading career education practitioners, administrators, and conceptualizers, is extremely high. The term "career education" carries a clear conceptual meaning. (Hoyt, 1974a).

3. The conceptual base of career education, using the word "work" as its core, is one that can be made applicable to all persons, of all ages, in all educational settings, and in all communities. This, of course, is not to say that it will appeal to all, but only that it is a concept that can be logically considered and discussed by all.

4. The career education concept has been endorsed by a greater variety and a greater number of leading national organizations, both within and outside of formal education, than any other current call for educational reform now in existence. The list of organizations participating in a recent publication on career education published by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States contains a partial listing as one example. (Chamber of Commerce of the USA, 1975).

5. Career education, with passage of P.L. 93-380 in 1974, became a part of the law of the land. In addition to this Federal legislation, ten State legislatures have enacted career education legislation. More than 30 State boards of education have adopted official career education policy positions and more than 40 State departments of education have appointed one or more persons as State coordinators of career education.

6. Career education has emerged primarily as a local, rather than as a State or Federal initiative. With fewer than 300 Federally-funded career education programs, it has been reported, by the Council of Chief State School Officers, that over 5,000 local school districts (of 17,000 in the USA) have initiated some kind of career education effort.

7. "How-to-do-it" examples abound for those interested in initiating career education efforts at the K-12 level. Examples are readily available. Where career education efforts have been evaluated, results have been generally positive. (OCE, 1974), (Hoyt, 1975a).

8. Career education demonstration efforts are currently aimed at demonstrating the most effective career education methods and procedures at the K-12 levels, and the viability of career education both at the postsecondary level and for special segments of the population. Such demonstrations should produce further evidence of the viability and effectiveness of career education.

9. The Education and Work Task Force at the National Institute of Education is continuing its strong efforts to support a program of basic research required for the long-run effectiveness of career education.

10. Where career education efforts have been initiated, they do not appear to be dropped because they were unsuccessful or disliked. In general, the pattern has been one of growth, not abandonment.

These ten conditions, collectively, represent what, to me, seems a solid rationale justifying an expression of interest in career education on the part of any educational system and by any community.

Initiating Community Career Education Efforts

Based on what we have learned from earlier attempts to initiate career education, a number of basic "ground rules" seem to have emerged. Such "ground rules" can be translated into a series of suggestions for those communities now wishing to consider career education. Those suggestions that currently seem most important and appropriate to me include:

1. Secure, study, and debate current literature describing the need for, nature of, and methodologies essential for implementing career education. Do not limit such study to professional educators. Leaders from the business-labor-industry-professional community and parents should be involved in decisions because, if career education is to be implemented, they will have key, collaborative roles to play. Do not begin without some kind of community consensus. A school board policy supporting and calling for career education must be a first step.

2. While recognizing the necessity for collaborative involvement, organize initial career education efforts in ways that emphasize the central importance of the classroom teacher and the teaching-learning process. The first order of concern should be centered around efforts to reduce worker alienation, among both students and teachers, in ways that will improve educational productivity - i.e., academic achievement.

3. Establish a Community Career Education Council. Such a Council should have representatives from the formal education system, from the student body, from the business-labor-industry-professional community, and from the home and family structure. It should be empowered and encouraged to formulate and recommend policies to the school board with respect to such matters as use of community resource persons in the classroom, field trips, work experience opportunities, use of community resources for career education, and placement.

4. Collect as much material as possible from other communities who have already initiated career education. Select promising ideas that you want to try. Use such materials to invent a career education approach uniquely suited to your community.

5. Recognize and provide for meeting teacher needs for in-service education in career education. Do not expect that teachers can or will devise effective career education strategies in their "spare time." A minimum of three to five days of in-service education for teachers must be provided.

6. Recognize the necessity for and encourage the strengthening of the quality and variety of both vocational-technical education and career guidance, counseling, placement, and follow up. Unless this is done, career education cannot hope to succeed.

7. Emphasize the equal importance of both adaptability skills and job specific skills in the total career education effort. It is fully as important to prepare students to change as it is to prepare them to enter the world of paid employment. It is vital that the importance of both academic and vocational education, as preparation for work, be emphasized.

8. Emphasize both the importance of paid and unpaid work in the career education effort. Helping persons make productive use of leisure time is equally as important as helping persons be productive in the world of paid employment.

9. Recognize and utilize currently existing efforts in the community involved in helping youth understand and capitalize on relationships between education and work - including such groups as Junior Achievement, Explorer Scouts, NABS, NAIEC, State employment services, efforts of the all-volunteer armed forces, vocational youth clubs, and church youth groups. Rather than compete, or attempt to substitute for such efforts, capitalize on their existence and involve them in the total collaborative efforts of career education. Remember, we are not at all who gets

credit for helping, but only about how much help persons receive.

10. Appoint a career education coordinator. Something that is the job of "everyone" becomes the work of no one unless somebody is around to encourage the efforts of all. Whether the coordinator is full-time or part-time, paid or unpaid, a member of the school staff or a person from the community, is not so important as that someone occupy this role. In addition to coordination responsibilities, that person should assume responsibility for collecting and disseminating evidence relative to the effectiveness of the career education effort.

These ten suggestions call primarily for an investment of effort, not for an investment of money. True, both Suggestion No. 5 and Suggestion No. 10 carry financial implications. If funds cannot be found for use in carrying out these two suggestions, the necessary degree of community enthusiasm for and commitment essential to career education's success is probably not present and it would be better to delay action until conditions change. That is the way it looks to me at this point in time.

Current Readiness for Implementation of the Career Education Concept

Increasingly, persons are asking for changes in current career education legislation, in the form of Federal laws, that would move OE from a demonstration mode to a programmatic implementation mode. There appears to be many who are saying, in effect, "We have already demonstrated our ability to deliver career education. What we now need is financial assistance to pay part of the additional costs required for making career education operational."

The official position of the United States Office of Education, on this matter, is that the Congress was wise in passing a demonstration, rather than a programmatic implementation, type of legislation in 1974. As an OE employee, I am obligated to support and defend this position. To do so in no way precludes an open and frank discussion on this question.

It seems appropriate to me, with respect to any kind of legislation, to ask and answer affirmatively four basic questions with respect to readiness for programmatic implementation of an educational concept, method, or procedure. These are:

1. Has the educational system demonstrated a need for this idea and is there evidence that it is desired by professional educators?

2. Has the concept, method, or procedure been demonstrated in enough places, with enough variability, so that there is reason to believe it could be readily modified so as to fit into existing educational practice?

3. Is there hard data demonstrating the worth and effectiveness of the method, concept, or practice leading to justifying an assertion that, if put into common practice, the quality of education would be likely to improve?

4. Is there reason to believe that, if Federal assistance were provided, it would likely be over-matched with State and/or local funds to such an extent that the Federal share would be relatively small?

Let me make it clear that these are my questions, not an expression of official OE policy. I present them here in order that you may know the basis on which I would answer questions raised with reference to readiness for implementation. I hope that you can join with me in considering these

four questions to be based on both reality and professional concern. I raise them in an effort to be helpful, not discouraging.

It is immediately obvious that different persons, depending on their personal biases, would demand different amounts and kinds of evidence before being willing to respond affirmatively to any of these questions. Those most eager to move toward full implementation are likely to be content with much less evidence than those opposed. Thus, even if the questions are put in an objective form, the answers given are bound to be heavily tinged with subjective judgements.

My personal judgement on these matters is at least as subjectively biased as that of others. As of now, my thinking would lead me to the following positions:

1. I believe a case could be made for a point of view that we are now ready to implement career education at the K-12 level. In my opinion, that case will (at least it should) be much stronger when the incremental quality improvement projects currently funded by the OCE are completed.

2. I believe we are at least one year away from being ready to implement career education in pre-service teacher education programs. While both interest and expertise in this area is increasing rather rapidly at the present time, we have not yet reached a stage where programmatic implementation efforts, on a wide scale, can be justified.

3. I believe we are at least three years away from being ready to implement career education in total institutional programs at the postsecondary school level - including both community colleges and the four-year collegiate settings. While some interest is evident, expertise and

evidence of effectiveness at still largely lacking.

4. I believe we are several years away from being ready to implement career education, on a nationwide scale, for such special segments of the population as low-income persons, minorities, and for the gifted and talented. Part of my reason for this belief stems from the need for considerable more demonstration of best methods and procedures. An even stronger part of my reasoning stems from what seems to me to be an obvious need for much more financial support than currently seems to be available if we were to attempt such nationwide implementation.

In stating these beliefs, it is essential that I make clear I am expressing only my own personal views, not any official position of the United States Office of Education. As of now, there exists no formal USOE position on the specific points I have just discussed. If and when an official USOE position is formulated on these specific points, I will, of course, support it and do my best to defend it.

Concluding Remarks

The primary purpose of this presentation has been to put career education, as it currently exists, in some perspective with reference to broader and more far-reaching proposals for dealing with the education/work dilemma in the United States. In so doing, I have pictured career education as a movement that operates under a "possible change" philosophy. I have tried to picture what seem to me to represent the current strengths of career education along with a set of action steps that could be undertaken in any community interested in initiating a career education effort.

NE 006 360

Finally, I conclude with a few personal observations regarding our current readiness to move, on a nationwide scale, from a demonstration to a programmatic implementation mode in career education.

In all of these matters, I have tried to present the current picture in a form that I hope is both clear and honest. If, by doing so, I have stimulated you to think more deeply about your own position on these matters, my purpose will have been served.

References

1. Herr, Edwin L; Cramer, Stanley H. (Monographs on Career Education) Conditions in Education Calling for Reform: An Analysis. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975.

2. An Introduction to Career Education: A Policy Paper of the United States Office of Education. DHEW Publication No. (OE) 75-00504. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975.

3. Career Education: What It Is and Why We Need It. Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, D.C., 1975.

4. Career Education: How To Do It. Office of Career Education, U.S. Office of Education, Washington, D.C., 1974.

5. Hoyt, Kenneth B.; "Evaluation of Career Education: Implications for Instruction at the Elementary School Level." Journal of Career Education, Spring, 1975.